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AN EARLY ESSAY ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.*

On May 3, 1844, the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia gave Thomas Gilpin, Esq., permission to read a printed paper entitled: "On the Representation of Minorities of Electors to Act with the Majority in Elected Assemblies." † The paper had been printed by the author at his own expense and dedicated to the society. The date at the end of the paper is May 1, 1844; in the dedication May 3, 1844.

Two copies of the pamphlet are in the Philadelphia Library; one is reported to be in the Harvard College Library, one in the Franklin Institute Library, in Philadelphia, and one in the Library of the Boston Athenæum. It is a small pamphlet of fifteen pages and was reprinted in the *Penn Monthly* in 1872.‡

This paper is remarkable as being one of the earliest systematic discussions of the plan now known as Minority, or Proportional Representation. The paper antedates Thomas Hare's earliest essays on the subject of Minority Representation by thirteen years; and that of James Garth Marshall by almost ten years.

The author wrote in a city, the members of whose legislative body, called Councils, were elected at the time on a general ticket by a majority of the votes. The results had

* Read before the Political Science Association of the Central States, Indianapolis, January 1, 1896.

† Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. iv, p. 81, Philadelphia, 1847.

‡ In answer to a request for information, published in the *Philadelphia Ledger* of December 4, 1895, as to where other copies might be found, Mr. James Monaghan, of the West Chester (Pa.) bar, replied that he had one copy in his private library. No other copies than those mentioned have come to the attention of the writer.

been unsatisfactory. It seemed to Gilpin that such a plan was based on two principles, one of which was sound, and the other unsound. It is right that the majority shall govern, but not right that the voice of the minority shall be unheard. He, therefore, undertook to examine the question whether a legislative assembly can be so elected as to represent the respective interests of the community *in deliberation* and to allow to the majority that control *in its decisions* to which it is entitled.

The political evils from which the city of Philadelphia suffered at that time seem to have been the same as at present—bossism and the subordination of local to national issues. The caucus comes in for severe criticism, and one of the arguments the author advances for his system is, that in his opinion, it would prevent “those hasty and unjust displacements from office which have taken place by granting to the successful party all the benefits of office, so offensive to the sentiments and feelings of a large and independent part of the community, desirous only of a steady, just and impartial administration of government.” From which it would seem as if the spoils system had already become firmly established in Philadelphia by 1840 or even earlier.

The system of election by a majority, as distinct from plurality, vote, the author thinks, was occasioning many evils—not the least among them that of giving to a small third party an entirely disproportionate influence when the two great parties were nearly equal in numbers. Thus he said the system of majority voting in Massachusetts had thrown an entirely undue power into the hands of the Abolitionists, who, by giving their support first to one party and then to another, could practically make their own terms, and was thus forcing both the other parties to become radical on the slavery issues, when otherwise neither of them would have been so. Nor did he think that the plan of plurality voting, just then adopted by Massachusetts, as a remedy for this evil, would help matters—on the contrary,

it would make them worse, since it might give to a party, absolutely in the minority, the power of controlling the public policy of the community, without consulting the other parties at all.

The plan proposed by the author was very simple. Each party was to put up its candidates as usual, a number equal to the whole number to be elected. The voting was to go on in the usual way, each voter having one vote for each of, say, twenty men—that was the number then in Councils. After the election each party was to have a number of representatives assigned to it, bearing the same ratio to twenty, as its vote bore to the total vote. The names standing first on the party list should be declared elected until the number assigned to the party should be exhausted. It is practically the Free List System which has been adopted of late in portions of Switzerland.

There is no indication in the proceedings of the American Philosophical Society that the paper was discussed in that body, either at the time, or later; nor is it very apparent from the history of the period what was the immediate occasion which gave rise to the paper. The subject of representative reform was indeed much debated at the time. The law of Congress requiring the States to be divided into single-member districts, had only just been passed, after great excitement in Congress, in answer to a demand for fairer representation and a chance for the minority. It is quite possible that more detailed researches will show that these ideas were advanced by earlier writers during the discussions incident to this Act of Congress. At present they seem, in this form at any rate, to have been original with Thomas Gilpin; even if they had been advanced before by writers and thinkers in Europe, which does not yet appear.

Hare does not mention having seen this pamphlet, though the expressions: *quota* and *representative quota* are here used much in the Hare sense. J. Francis Fisher, of Philadelphia,

in his "Degradation of our Representative System and its Reform,"* claims to have worked out a plan similar to Hare's before the latter had published anything upon the subject. In such case he may have been indebted to Gilpin, or at least to the discussion which Gilpin started, for the fundamental thought; but if so, he forgot to give Gilpin credit for it. Fisher was also a member of the Philosophical Society and may have heard Gilpin's paper. He must have known of Kane's claim for Gilpin in the obituary notice of the latter, read before the society, February 17, 1854,† in which he said that Gilpin had proposed the first matured plan for minority representation, which had gained public attention among us. Indeed, Fisher could hardly have escaped seeing the pamphlet itself, as Gilpin doubtless sent copies to all his colleagues in the society.

Salem Dutcher, in his "Minority, or Proportional Representation," speaks of it as the first essay on the subject of Minority Representation in English, and states that only one copy was known to be in existence.

Thomas Gilpin, the author of the paper—which whether the first or not, is certainly an early and cogent argument for the principle of fair play for the minorities—was born in Philadelphia, in 1776, and died in the same city in 1853. He was a successful paper manufacturer, and has the credit of having introduced many improvements into that branch of industry in this country. He came of Quaker stock. His father, Thomas Gilpin, was banished from Philadelphia at the outbreak of the Revolution on account of supposed sympathy with England. He had felt in his life the bitterness of belonging to a minority which not only was unrepresented, but was not even allowed to speak on its own behalf. His son, whose thoughts may have been turned to the subject by the experience of his father, gathered together a

* Philadelphia, 1863.

† Proceedings of American Philosophical Society, Vol. vi, p. 13, Philadelphia, 1859.

series of papers relating to the treatment of these Quakers and published them in 1848, under the title: "Exiles in Virginia with Observations on the Conduct of the Society of Friends during the Revolutionary War." *

Father and son were members of the Philosophical Society, the former, one of the first members; the latter, elected in 1814.† Thomas Gilpin was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Philosophical Society, and dedicated other pamphlets than the one on Minority Representation to the Society, notably one entitled, "An Essay on Organic Remains as Connected with an Ancient Tropical Region of the Earth."

In his home at Kentmere he entertained many of the most prominent men of his time. James A. Bayard was a near neighbor. Henry D. Gilpin, Attorney-General of the United States, was a frequent visitor, and in such intercourse it was natural that he should develop his interest in scientific politics.‡

The history of this pamphlet on Proportional Representation, illustrates in a striking way how there is a time for everything, and how everything must wait for its time. Written at a period when there was a general demand for some kind of reform in our system of representation, it undertook to show how, by adopting a system of proportional representation, the general ticket and caucus system could be made to yield satisfactory results. It failed to accomplish its immediate purpose; and only now, after fifty years, is beginning to bear practical fruit. The caucus system and the single-member district system have not yielded the results hoped for. Whether any scheme of proportional or minority representation can do better, may be

* Cf. Proceedings of American Philosophical Society, December 6, 1895, Vol. xxxiv. Philadelphia, 1896.

† Cf. Early Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, April 15, 1814, p. 446.

‡ The writer is indebted to Mr. Wm. Bernard Gilpin, of Philadelphia, grand-nephew of the subject of this sketch, for these facts.

a question; but it begins to look as if some such method were destined to have a trial, and in such an event, Gilpin's plan has much to recommend it. The historical interest attaching to the paper has seemed to make it worth while to reprint it entire, and accordingly it appears below.

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On the Representation of Minorities of Electors to Act with the Majority in Elected Assemblies. By Thomas Gilpin. Philadelphia: John C. Clark, Printer, 60 Dock Street, 1844.

Owing to the difficulty of procuring impartial and useful legislation in the present mode of conducting the elections, it becomes worthy of consideration, whether there may not be a plan constituted for choosing representatives for the several legislative bodies differently from the present one, so as to have a more equal and just relation to the condition of society—to preserve more truly the rights of the people; to carry more strength and talent, and a more efficient expression of public opinion into deliberative assemblies.

The present mode of choosing representatives by *a majority of the votes of the electors*, has been so obviously before the people, and it is so easy for the majority to continue it, that it has been used in popular governments, from their early origin, and has remained without any attempt at improvement, or even consideration. It is true that it is based upon the just principle, of *the right of the majority to govern*; but in practical legislation it is connected with a very erroneous one, *that the voice of the majority alone is to be regarded*. Thus, in making an election of representatives as it is now done, in a district, by the majority, a large part of the people forming *barely the minority*, is deprived of any interest or voice in the elected councils, and there is no opportunity to bring into them any considerations, but those respected by the majority.

But if the deliberative assemblies were divested, as they ought to be, of the strong desire for political power, and exclusive legislative action, there would be a better estimate of the advantage of a representation to correspond to the general feeling and opinion of the people.

Let us therefore examine the question, Whether there can be a legislative assembly elected, so as to represent the respective interests of the community *in its deliberations*, and to allow the control of the majority *in its decisions* to which it is entitled.

For the purpose of testing the proposition, it will be necessary to advert to the operation of the present system in its forming some of the representative assemblies, in the example of one or two particularly known to us; but these are not referred to from any motive of adverse observation.

The usual results of the elections in the City of Philadelphia, for its Councils or Corporation, gave for several years, but a bare majority of the electoral votes to elect the whole representation, which was thus continued from year to year by one party, and the operations of the Councils and City interest governed exclusively by it.

By the returns, at the elections for several years previous to the last, a very uniform state of voting at the polls continued—say for the years 1840, 1841, 1842. In 1841, the number of votes polled was 10,304, and the votes were returned but of two parties, who gave respectively 5545 votes, and 4759 votes,—so that a change of 394 votes in that year, from one party to the other, would have displaced the whole representation of twenty members of the Corporation. And it is also obvious, that as the whole number was put in by *the majority*, there was no representation for the *minority*, which gave the votes of nearly one-half the citizens. These have no voice in the councils, be their candidates ever so worthy and efficient, and their interests ever so important. And it would be illiberal to conclude that abstract political sentiment should constitute a disqualification to attend to

their own and the public concerns in a legislative assembly. Independently of this, it is very evident, that the influence derived from the possession of power and office tends to preserve it; it is scarcely ever, if ever, voluntarily yielded to a just consideration of the equal rights of the community, in consulting the general good feeling requisite for constituting a legislative assembly. And it is evidence of an arbitrary, and not of a fair republican principle, for any party to retain the exclusive representation and responsibilities of the public weal; because experience has abundantly shown, that where this has been long continued, either in republics or monarchies, it involves them all in the same character, and is the virtual source of oppression and injury—the cause of great discontent,—and when not subversive of the administration, it is subversive of the harmony and confidence which ought to be afforded to it.

And it is *the right of every interest to be represented, as far as possible*. There are many advantages to be derived from the introduction of opposing ideas, if it is only to test the strength of correct or prevailing measures: for it is certain that a delegation to represent the most important interests may be taken from all parties, so as to balance the public mind, draw forth its energies, and substitute relative instead of arbitrary action, so much the result of assemblies holding long and exclusive legislation.

It is a matter of general acknowledgment, and even of record, that had the voice of the opposition, so frequently and respectfully offered but disregarded, in the administration of our late financial concerns, received attention from the persons then in power, the catastrophe so universally spread over the country, would have been greatly lessened, and probably averted; and as we should not be confident that other institutions are now free from a similar effect of exclusive action, a cautious oversight should be given to regulate them.

There is another evil growing out of the present system of electing representatives in this manner in opposition, without having respect to the minorities: in many places a third party is coming forward, which though the minor one, and without independent power, is nevertheless important to both; and being at hand to be solicited, can give its numbers and influence to either; holding a sway between them, it is able in return to commute for its own interests beyond their merit.

A management of the kind among the parties now in the State of New York, is producing this dilemma there, although for want of exact information, it cannot be further observed upon at present: but in the State of Massachusetts, it is exhibited more exactly,—it is there that a *third party*, now the advocate of abolition, holds the balance so as to vacillate between the two political parties. And in order to make this understood the case may be stated as it exists, at least in its proportionate numbers, to show in what way this effect is produced.

The larger party in one district may have a proportionate vote, say of 10,000 electors, and yet be deficient in a majority.

The opposing political party may vote . . 8,000
and the third party, *now for abolition*, . . . 5,000

Making together an aggregate of 23,000

Now it is evident, that the measures of both the former, may be under the management, or even control, of the third party. In this manner partial legislation and ultra measures have been obtained by the urgency of the smaller body of the three, which would not have been permitted in an independent organization of the electors and representatives.

The Legislature of Massachusetts has sought to remedy this evil, by providing that a *plurality of votes* shall be regarded as that of a *majority*; but the event of this will be, that the

plurality party, though able to command a greater number of votes than either of the others, but less than both, will obtain the sway in the State, and subject both the other parties to it.

It will therefore be evident, that this proposed expedient will not redress the evil,—and how strangely will it operate! The plurality votes of 10,000 electors, will enable it in legislation to have control over 13,000; because the plurality ticket being united, will carry its majority over the divided tickets of the other voters—which of course is subversive of the principles of republican representation.

Has there not been good reason to believe that in this way, interests of high importance to society have been frequently compromised during the contentions of the large political parties, by alternate cessions to the various sub-interests in return for their votes and influence, to an extent and character detrimental to the future interests of society, and which neither party would have conscientiously acceded to, if invested with free and independent legislation?

The question then offered is, Does the case admit of a practical system for equal representation?

The following one is presented for it:—It is believed to be efficient, and justly applicable to the present state of society. It is founded upon the principle of Republican Government and equal representation, and capable of bringing forward the latent good sense of the people, now much withdrawn from public service, owing to the overrule of political contention and party management; and that it will cause the elected body to be an exact representation of the public interests.

Let the number of representatives, allotted to each district of a State, be divided into the number of electors, so that *a quota may be established, to allow a certain number of votes to choose a representative.*

The number of votes thus assigned, taken for all the delegates together, will of course be the number of votes

found in the district; for the quota for the election of each delegate may actually be determined upon, when the votes are all handed in, at the close of the election.

As every quota of votes may be united in by any interest, and will entitle it to a representative, so one or more quotas united, according to the number of voters, may choose one or more representatives for an interest, independently of the others.

Should even *general politics* continue to be a *paramount consideration*, as it has so long prevailed to be, and the number of voters be so large as to command a sufficient number of quotas, a majority in the elected body may continue to act even for *political purposes*; but other quotas will be obtained by the minority to have an opportunity to represent *their political* or other views, and different interests thus represented may advocate independently any important measures which require it.

In this way, the selection of candidates may be made up without excitement, and certainly without competition; because they may be sent very much from separated parties, having a union of interests, so that each may promote its own candidate; of course the equivalent considerations for introducing partisans into general tickets will be at an end, and with them all the small legislation of closet and club-meeting politicians, to make their nominations of representatives, bound to a general understanding to uphold party interests, and not at liberty to advocate measures independently beyond them.

This plan would be eminently conservative of general representation; it would produce steadiness of legislative action, would prevent the sudden dismissal of *all the representatives of a party from power at any one time* by the contrivance of officious politicians, who are able easily to turn the scale by misrepresentations when the parties are nearly equal; and even when this occurs by a sudden change of the public mind, the change cannot act disadvantageously on

legislation, because there will always remain a sufficient number of the electors unchanged to return many of the most suitable delegates of the previous party to be mingled with those newly elected.

This plan will prevent very much those hasty and unjust displacements from office which have taken place, by granting to the successful party "all the benefits of office," so offensive to the sentiments and feelings of a large and independent part of the community desirous only of a steady, just, and impartial administration of government.

By this means the Legislature would be filled by delegates for special objects, and renew its republican features by qualifications to take charge of the respective interests of the community, with a better consciousness of service and responsibility than that of being sent as *simple delegates* or *representatives* of a political party for the term of one year, more qualified to practice in *the art* than in *the science* of public economy and legislation.

Would not such an appropriation of suitable persons vastly improve our public assemblies?

Would it not introduce individual responsibility and intelligence, both into the several assemblages for the appointment of candidates, and by the selection of men adapted to their appointments?

Would it not induce respectable assemblages of persons now adverse to common political meetings, but who would be willing to attend when the *special interests of the country required it, for business purposes, and for objects* which demanded legislative aid and representation?

Would it not in a measure *reorganize the attention* of the community, break up the caucuses of political societies, to which the better part of the people are victims, and the victims of the aspirants to offices, who offer no choice to them but of party candidates elected to sustain themselves?

Might not the great interests of the country first be brought forward and understood, and then persons selected

to attend to them in their several departments, and these varied on occasions where particular objects required it?

Let us now review the course of some of the last elections for the City of Philadelphia, in relation to the adaptation of this system, and it will be found, that had the plan been then carried into effect, it would not have destroyed *the majority* of the present party, although, it is true, it would not have so far gratified it *as to allow it all the delegation*; yet the Councils would have been more just, and of course more safe in all their operations, if they had been guided by such a courtesy as to have united other interests with their own in conducting the public business. For thus the Councils represented little more than a *divided authority*, dependent upon an *uncertain majority*, chiefly supported, if not contrived, out of previous patronage and incumbency of office.

The votes given at the city election, 1841, were . . . 10,304
and 20 representatives were elected.

If, then, 500 votes would be the assigned quota as
the due proportion for a representative, the
aggregate would be, for the 20, 10,000

Dispensing with the residuary fraction of 304
the majority to elect gave 5545 votes, which,
at 500 votes per delegate, gave 11 rep.

The minority which failed to elect gave 4759 votes,
which would have elected 9 “

Making the whole number of 20 rep.

and this would have left in favor of the ruling party a majority of two representatives, which is as great as the general electoral vote would have given on the former mode, or could be claimed for it on any public appeal.

As an act of justice, such an arrangement is required to satisfy the public mind, and it would amalgamate the better feelings of the community?

Should any excitement be produced by disquietude of the people, by accidental circumstances, or by retaliation, and a consequent change of City Councils ensue, so that the *opposite party alone* gets into power, the event will not be less to be deprecated than by having the present or any other *partial or exclusive administration*.

It is always unwise to afford exclusive power to any one party, particularly as it regards its own character and responsibility: the party out of power is accustomed to take advantage of every failure of the measures of those in power, and many operations are often in progress, the propriety of which, at least in public judgment, is decided by success, be their nature and risk what they may; but even this judgment may not be altogether so unreasonable when legislation is one of assumed and exclusive responsibility, because the acts of any public body are much better deliberated upon, and more judiciously determined, when there is not the uniform disposition to urge business forward by the sanguine view often taken by persons accustomed to act together.

The following view may be taken of the result of this plan for presenting the *minorities to act with the majority* in the public body, by showing its application to the last return of votes for corporators in the City Councils; and the rules are given by which this plan may be adapted to govern similar elections.

After the tickets have been agreed upon on the part of the electors as usual, and include the whole number of representatives to be voted for, they are to be handed in by them at the several wards to the judges and inspectors.

But the votes are to be assigned differently from the usual mode, and the choice of representatives will be made from them as follows:—

First. A number of votes to form a *representative quota* for the *choice of one member* will have to be fixed upon: this might be done by referring, for a standard, to the number of the votes given in the district at the last previous election;

but it may be better to wait for the close of the pending election, and then procure the number of votes polled at that time.

Second. This number is to be divided by that of the number of representatives allotted for the district, in order to fix upon the proportion of votes, as a *representative quota*, which each ticket must give to entitle it to choose a delegate.

Third. Each elector's ticket may contain, as candidates, the whole number of representatives to be voted for in the district; and these should be placed in preferences highest on the list, in order that those first set on it may be chosen according as the number of votes given may entitle the ticket to one or more of its candidates.

Fourth. The representatives are to be chosen by any electing interest whose votes amount to one or more representative quota, and it is to have one or more representatives accordingly. Those who are highest in vote, are to be first chosen; and when the votes are equal, then the preference is to be given to those who are highest named on its list of candidates.

Fifth. When the number of representatives is not made up by the votes in the representative quotas, then the remainder is to be taken from the residuary numbers of the unsatisfied votes, beginning with the highest number unsatisfied on each ticket, and then in succession, from which there is to be taken the candidate highest in vote on its ticket; or if the votes are equal, then the highest on the list.

Sixth. If only one representative is to be chosen from a district, the election is, *in this case only*, to be made as it is now done, *by the majority*.

In fixing primarily upon the representative quota, it is not desirable to arrive at any particular exactness in the division of the whole number of votes among the representatives; at least not to descend to the fractional parts of hundreds, because less than these could not be entitled to a representative. And when the multiple or whole number is determined

upon, it places all the representative quotas on the equal footing necessary for all useful purposes, and they will have all the same claim upon the residuary votes.

Under the above rules we refer to a general result of the election of 1841, which would have been as follows:—

In this statement the whole election returns are given; but the division of the minority vote is of course supposititious.

The votes of the majority were . .	5,545	
“ of the minority.	4,759	
	<hr/>	10,304

Thus, twenty representatives allotted, establishes a representative quota of 500 votes to each delegate.

Majority interests represented.		Votes Polled.	Delegates elected assigned.	Residuary Votes.
1. Political party (W.), . . .	5545	5545	11	45
Interests which might be represented :				
2. Political party (L. F.), . .	4759	1859	3	359
3. Temperance interest, . .		1200	2	200
4. Girard College,		600	1	100
5. Agriculture,		700	1	200
6. Manufactures, Commerce, }		400	0	400
			below 500	
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		10,304	18	

The quota representation thus voted, does not yield the full number of delegates, and the two required are to be taken from the residuary numbers highest on the returned tickets, viz:

6. Manufactures and Commerce,	400	1
2. Political,	359	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Making the full number 20

The representative is to be taken from the highest in vote or in place on the several tickets; thus the party which does not obtain a member on its quota, and ascends highest in the residuary vote, obtains one when the quotas are supplied.

The reference in the foregoing statement has been made to the state of the election returns of the three years previous to the last, because they were tolerably uniform, and the result of the middle year was taken. In the year 1843 the votes were materially changed, and suddenly gave a majority of 2448 for the highest political party; this majority may be either accidental or permanent, and it might have been produced on either side by some accidental or extra influence; but in this view it is not intended to discuss the merit of any particular politics, but only to allude to the cases, in order to guard against partial representation, and the injurious effect of sudden vacillations upon public affairs.

If the change is one of those, liable to be produced by an easy influence of the public mind, it ought to be guarded against by some change of system in taking the public votes; and if it is more permanent, it is still equally proper to arrange a method by which both sides should have a due representation of their opinions and measures.

It will be proper, further to carry out this rule, in order to show its application to the election returns of the votes and representatives of the City and County of Philadelphia in 1843, and the manner in which a quota representation would then have given a majority of the Assembly members and have represented the same political interest.

County votes of the majority,	6,604
“ of the minority,	<u>3,890</u>
Total,	10,494

And as four representatives are allowed, the quota representation in this case to elect a representative will be 2500, leaving the residuary portion, 494.

	Votes polled.	Delegates.	Residuary votes.
1. Political party (W.), . . .	6,604	2	1,604
2. Political party (L. F.), . . .	3,890	1	1,390
	<hr/>		
	10,494		

But as the quota representation
yields only 3 delegates, one is
to be taken from the highest
residuary vote (W.), 1604, 1

Making the full number, 4

Which, in this case returns:—

Of the 1st political party (W.), . . .	3	Representatives.
Of the 2d " " (L. F.), . . .	1	"
	<hr/>	
	4	

Large political parties do not seem to be expedient for conducting the useful business of a country, as their purposes become conventional, and their action becomes merged in the support of place or power, which should be prevented when there is sufficient identity of public interest independent of such considerations.

How little ought general or national politics to influence the internal police arrangements of a State or city, its improvements or its finances? Yet is it not made a medium for general acceptance to every office, public services being a secondary consideration to subserviency in political measures?

The majority power has for a long time ruled all the interest of the country, and has been exercised with arbitrary inconsiderateness alternately by each party. It can be corrected in no way so effectually as by throwing immediately before the public the objects which should claim its attention, in order to produce an immediate connection between the people and their interests, and this can only be effected by a representation independent of politics.

By this plan, however, the rise of a political party to a certain extent is not altogether impossible, and might be permitted if useful; but it being easy thus to introduce into the legislative bodies other interests by minorities, they will keep it in check by the independence of their election, as they probably will by their intelligence.

Should even the Native American party now coming forward be found worthy of public support, and get favor, so as to be useful for a time, its purity and efficiency will be much preserved by its not attaining to a predominant sway, or, at least, by only arriving at it relatively to other interests.

Reference has been made to the election returns of the City of Philadelphia, merely on account of its easy investigation, as it answers for an example of the deficiencies in representation; these, however, exist in the same manner in all the elected bodies and they will so remain and be unsatisfactory to the constituents, until the interests of the minorities become respected, so that they may be represented and act with the majorities; and it is believed the plan now offered, when it becomes understood, may be adopted to remedy the deficiency and it is referred for that purpose to the discretion and intelligence of those who acknowledge the serious evils of party contentions arising out of the right of the elective franchise.

That the alteration, by this plan, in making election returns, would change the representations from various localities may be expected; but it is to be expected that it will be generally to great advantage, because it carries out a principle of exact representation and relief; and as delegates can be sent to represent every important interest, it must give evidence of its own propriety, and must eventually be acceptable.

The practice heretofore pursued, of resting all predilections upon the title of a great political party, has subjected the district divisions, as well as the political parties, to *very peculiar*, though they may be *appropriate epithets*, many of

them certainly not selected for their elegance, and which clearly indicate considerable restiveness on the part of the people.

The advocates of particular measures, or even of a favorite candidate, will have at all times an opportunity to unite for a quota representative, and by calling upon each elector to discriminate among the candidates, to place at the head of his ticket the best man, and thus bring forward an interest to be respected in the representative body; this will require deliberate reflection on the choice to be made among the various objects of moral or civil benefit, in order to give preference to those of the highest importance.

If this system be sound and practical, as it is believed to be, the further promotion of it is respectfully submitted. At no period of republican history was there required more attention to the renewal of representative principles and the revival of representative purity. In an enlightened age, the extension of a great confederation of popular governments is in irresistible progress over an immense land, now allied in the courtesy of great national feeling: it becomes, therefore, necessary to preserve this; and may it not be accomplished less by extreme authority, than by rendering a just representation to the varied interests of an extended people?

Philadelphia, 1st May, 1844.